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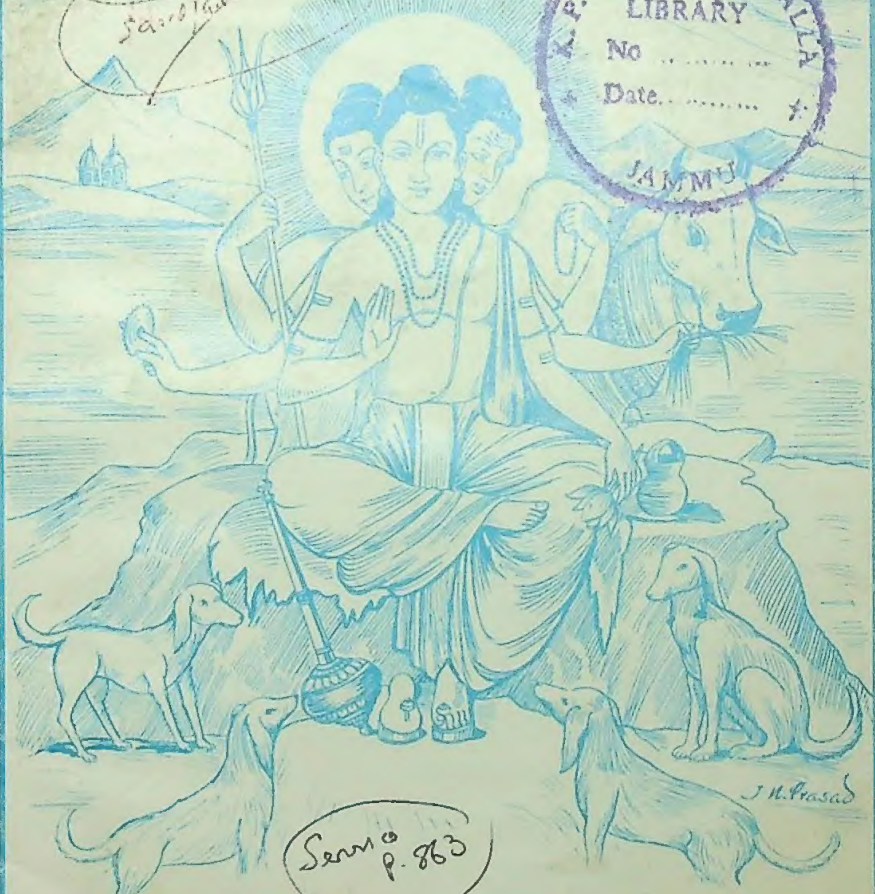
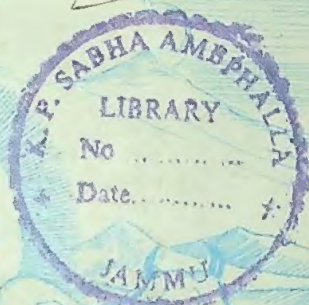
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Sabari adoring Rāma

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



KALYANA-KALPATARU

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL
IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

Vol. 45

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No. 9

Śabarī Adoring Rāma

तौ दृष्ट्वा तु तदा सिद्धा समुत्थाय कृताञ्जलिः ।

पादौ जग्राह रामस्य लक्ष्मणस्य च धीमतः ॥

"Rising respectfully with joined palms on seeing the two princes, Śabarī (who had attained perfection through Yoga or abstraction) for her part presently clasped the feet of Śrī Rāma and the prudent Lakṣmaṇa."

—(V. R. III. 74. 6)



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A Caution and A Warning

(Continued from page 765)

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

For acquiring knowledge of these we should associate with and serve great souls, study books dealing with the Name, Form, glories and stories of the Lord, chant the same and dwell thereon in our mind. When we know the virtues and efficacy of a thing we develop reverence and love for it, and the knowledge of its imperfections leads us to conceive hatred for it. This is a general law. And it is a well-known fact that there is none equal to God either in virtue or in glory—God whose very thought has brought forth this universe, the mere winking of whose eyes means the creation and dissolution of the world, who is powerful enough to raise within the twinkling of an eye a creature as insignificant as a fly to the position of Indra himself, and likewise to reduce a great being like Indra to the position of a fly,—nay, who has the power to bring the impossible into the region of possibility and to render impossible what is ordinarily possible; in fact, there is nothing which is beyond the scope of His power. Although He is so great, He does not ignore those who worship Him; on the contrary, He begins to worship the worshipper himself with the same degree of devotion and love. One who has come to know this secret even partially, how can he bear His separation even for a moment?

When sought by the humble, the distressed, the helpless or even the worst sinner, God does not take account of their vices or evil conduct but hugs them to His bosom like a

loving mother. Can the person who comes to know the secret of this compassionate nature of the Supreme *Puruṣa*, who is supremely kind and the true friend of all, make any delay in raising a cry of distress for his own purification?

The virtues of Forbearance, Forgiveness, Compassion, Self-abnegation, Serenity, Love, Wisdom, Equanimity, Fearlessness, Affection, Artlessness, Tenderness, Sweetness, Friendliness, etc., are present in the *Paramātmā* in an infinite measure, and they are naturally imbibed by devotees who worship Him. One who knows this secret cannot for a moment worship any object other than the *Paramātmā*.

How can it be possible for a person who has known the truth about God to transgress any injunction of God, the embodiment of Love, humility and compassion, who knows the secret of love, nay, who is Love personified, who though immeasurably great follows His loving devotees and companions as a shadow?

Let alone him who has come to know His virtues and power, even one who has faith in the existence of such a virtuous and powerful Lord can never commit any sin; on the contrary, the thought of His virtues and power will, as a matter of course, infuse fearlessness, cheerfulness and tranquillity into his heart. At every step he receives support and protection from the Lord, which goes to accelerate his progress in *Sādhana* and replenish the store of his vigour and zeal and this finally leads him to realization of God.

Even if this faith cannot be developed, one should not forget God even for a moment, as otherwise one may have to face a great calamity. For the scriptures as well as saints declare, and this is also supported by reason, that man attains whatever object he meditates on at the time of his departure from this world. Whatever object man meditates on while going to sleep he generally visualizes as a dream at night. Similarly, whatever he meditates on at the time of death,

he attains in after life. If he meditates on God he will attain God; if he meditates on the earthly objects of enjoyment, he will come back to earth. Should anyone imagine that he would fix his mind on God at the time of final parting, it would be a great mistake on his part to do so. At the time of death, one's senses and mind get weak and exhausted, and it is the old habit that generally asserts itself. Therefore, being blessed with a human birth, we should not take the risk of deferring the contemplation of God to the last moment, that is to say, even if one finds himself unable to pursue any other discipline, he should at least form the habit of constant remembrance of God, His virtues and powers. No expense or labour is involved in this practice; on the contrary, it brings immediate joy and peace, and is very easy to perform. The only thing required is faith. The rest will be accomplished as a matter of course. To cultivate this faith in God one should hear from the lips of saints and other great souls discourses on the Name, Form, virtues, glory, love and sports of the Lord and dwell on the same in the mind. By doing so, one can develop faith in and supreme Love for God and thus attain Him easily through the grace of the saints and God Himself. But alas! for want of faith in God and the other world we have shut our eyes to the fact and instead of utilizing our precious life to the best advantage, viz., for attaining salvation, we waste it in enjoying the transient and ephemeral pleasures of the world. The momentary pleasures that we seem to derive from worldly objects is not true happiness, it is a deception. This can be realized by even a slight exercise of thought. God has endowed us with intellect and wisdom in order that we may make a prudent use of our time. Therefore, one who recklessly wastes his life gives only an indication of his ignorance. Who am I ? What is the nature of this world ? In what relation do I stand with this world ? What use do

I make of my time ? What is my proper duty? These are questions which everyone of us should carefully consider.

All living creatures of this world seek happiness, happiness that is uninterrupted and unbounded, and no one desires that he should have the least amount of suffering at any time. But this does not happen. What generally happens is just the opposite of what one seeks. The reason is that due to ignorance and short-sightedness, one does not make the best use of his time. Even those who are considered highly learned and wise in this world regard worldly or material happiness as true happiness and madly pursue it out of infatuation. They hold true advancement to consist in the attempt to secure such happiness. According to many, accumulation of wealth which is a means of procuring worldly enjoyments, being the highest object of life, forms the criterion of advancement; while there are others who regard honour, prestige and fame to be the measure of success in life. But all this is nothing but foolishness, for these being transient themselves, the pleasure derived through them is also nothing but transient. And because it is transient, the authors of the scriptures, the *R̥sis*, have called it unreal. This is the view held by the scriptures and saints and it is also supported by reason. Whatever is real can never perish. However much the forces of death may contend against it, it will ever remain unshakable as a rock. And that which is unreal can never endure, however much you may try to preserve it. Realizing all this, we should withdraw our mind, senses and intellect from the pursuit of transient, momentary pleasures of this world and employ them all in the attempt to attain true happiness. To advance in the path leading to that happiness is the mark of true progress or success in life.

Now, let us consider what is true happiness, and where it may be found. Also what is false happiness, and where

does it lie. The only eternal, imperishable object in creation is the All-powerful *Paramātmā*, who is a compact mass of consciousness and Bliss; therefore, happiness derived in relation to Him is the true and eternal happiness. Worldly objects being themselves transitory and evanescent, pleasure that is derived through them is also transient and momentary. Now, let us consider how these objects and the pleasure through them are transient and ephemeral. Take the instance of cow's milk. When it is freshly milked in the morning, its taste, appearance and quality are quite different; if, however, it is held over till the evening, all these things change; it does not retain the taste and quality possessed by it in the morning; even its appearance is changed, it gets a bit thicker. On the second or third day, it assumes a different character altogether; not only its flavour, properties and appearance are completely changed, it acquires a different name as well. The milk is automatically transformed into curd, its sweetness turns into sourness; instead of being an antidote against flatulence and biliousness, it becomes favourable to their growth; from a flowing liquid it is changed into a thick mass. If it is kept over for ten days more it will turn into a poison, highly injurious to health. Now even a nectar-like substance like milk, being of a transitory character, loses its flavour, virtues, appearance and name even though it is kept thoroughly undisturbed. Had it been an eternal substance, it would not have undergone any change or decay. The same test may be applied in determining the nature of other objects. The happiness that appears to inhere in these worldly objects is not true happiness. If the momentary flash of happiness appearing therein is treated as happiness, the suffering with which they are attended is even more pronounced; therefore, they should be rejected. Similarly, sexual enjoyment gives a momentary pleasure; but a person who gets addicted to it will lose his

health, strength, mental powers, energy and longevity and leading a miserable existence, will soon find himself within the jaws of death. And if it is indulged in contrary to injunction of the scriptures, it will bring him a bad name in this world and tortures of hell hereafter. Therefore, let us consider how much suffering and for what length of time, one has to go through in exchange for this momentary gratification. The same is true of other forms of sensual enjoyment inasmuch as all enjoyments weaken the senses and body, and make the heart impure, and the mind weak and unsteady; they lead to the exhaustion of religious merits earned in previous births and aggravation of sin. Not only this, they make even self-possessed and valiant souls self-indulgent and voluptuous and render them incapable of treading the path of God-realization. Even if any of them attempts to tread this path, he does not attain speedy results.

Therefore, it is a mistake to amass wealth with a view to enjoy the pleasures of the world, because, in the first place, acquisition of wealth involves a good deal of trouble and exertion. Not only that, it also involves the perpetration of good many sins or undesirable acts which may require expiation in hell. Once it is amassed, its protection becomes a problem. Occasions arise when people have to risk their very life for its protection. No small trouble has to be faced even in its expenditure or in giving it away as alms. There is a popular saying to the effect that giving away wealth is as good as death. Its loss is attended with terrible suffering and sorrow, when one is forced to leave all his possessions behind and pass to the next world, his grief and sorrow know no bounds. Therefore, is it anything but foolishness to face all this terrible suffering for the sake of a momentary pleasure? Again the pleasures of senses he seeks to obtain from his wealth, he cannot enjoy just as he pleases. The greatest men of the world who possessed great worldly

wisdom and practical knowledge had to leave this wealth and depart with great repentance and sorrow. Even those who were endowed with great physical prowess and wielded immense power and influence could not carry their wealth with them, not to speak of puny mortals like ourselves. It is also not infrequently found that a certain individual amasses wealth and another enjoys it and spends it occasionally in a manner quite contrary to the wishes or expectations of the original possessor. Their case is analogous to that of the bee which gathers honey for the enjoyment of others and thus exhibits its rank folly. A bee is after all an ordinary insect not endowed with reason; but a human being, who fails to take this aspect into consideration is even more foolish than the bee.

(To be continued)



Meditation opens up all the closed inner gates in the spine and brain that bring power to your body, mind, and soul. When you meditate your body becomes filled with electricity or life energy that is ever present in the ether. Most people do not realize that. Meditation is the turning on of the inner switch that fills the body with the divine current. That is why it is so important to keep your concentration on the aftereffects of meditation every minute of one's existence. Do not neutralize that peace with disturbing thoughts. If you gather concentration in a pail of meditation, and have a leak of restlessness, your concentration will run out. You must not have any mental leaks.

—Self-Realization

Unto Bliss

—*Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar*

Practicants should never develop identification with wealth, which is a source of great intoxication. It is difficult for a moneyed man to acquire humility in the true sense of the term. Wealth brings in its train a number of other evils which act as hindrances on the path of God-realization. Acquisition of wealth develops greed, and failure to acquire it brings despair and sorrow. Thoughts directed towards wealth prove a fruitful source of distraction to one who seeks to concentrate his mind on God. Be contented, therefore, with what little you have got; but if that fails to satisfy your actual needs strive to get more through honest and legitimate means. If you are already in possession of wealth, look upon it as belonging to God, and utilize it in the service of God as you deem fit. This is the best use of wealth. Never squander it on frivolous pursuits nor utilize it in oppressing others. Do not attach any importance to it. Never allow the pride of wealth to possess your mind. Never allow the greed of wealth to get the better of you. Remember: he who is greedy of wealth can never advance on the path of God-realization.

Practicants should always take care to shun the company of women. Let there be no spirit of bravado in this respect. Those who freely mix with women, preach on the pulpit of ladies, attend their meetings or live in their midst will realize, if they look deeper within in order to find out the actual state of their heart, that although on the surface they may not be able to detect anything objectionable, there is a dark spot

somewhere within their heart, which is covered up by outward thoughts of purity, etc. They will find that there is a more or less natural affinity in their heart, which in the name of Reason or under the cloak of benevolent intentions, attracts it towards women, specially young women. When this attraction grows through constant association, or through any other cause, the light of benevolent intentions suddenly appears to have gone out and their heart is transformed into a stage for the naked dance of evil desires. Their Reason, being indeterminate finds itself too weak to control the mind. Deprived of the guidance of Reason and smitten by evil desires, the mind is easily dragged along by the senses. Thus even externally the fall of man is brought about. Like men, women also should shun the company of men. The unrestrained association of men and women is never conducive to the good of either sex. This is proved by the testimony of scriptures as well as by practical experience. It is, therefore, needless to say that those who have devoted themselves to spiritual culture should take special care to keep themselves safe from this lure.

Practicants should also give up the infatuation for honour. Keep aloof as far as possible from such quarters where you are likely to receive honour and even from such activity as is likely to bring you honour or praise, or pursue it secretly, so that honour and praise may not come to you at all. Even if you receive them in spite of your effort to shun them do not accept them from the core of your heart. If you feel flattered when you receive homage and honour, it means you have accepted them. Refusal of honour does not consist in merely rejecting them outwardly. Honour and fame though agreeable and sweet, are poisonous in effect and ruin the spiritual life of the practicant. Therefore, always take care to shun honour and praise.



The Glory of Satsaṅga

—R. Ramdas Thampuran

सत्संगत्वे निस्संगत्वं.....

.....निश्चलतत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ।

From Satsaṅga he develops detachment.....eventually culminates in liberation, while living itself.

(*Bhaja Govindam*)

Association with saints and holy men is the mainstay in one's evolution towards the divine kingdom. It is like being linked to a spiritual engine. The *Mahāpuruṣa* (saint) toils and nourishes the devotee and uplifts him physically, mentally, and spiritually towards the final goal *Mukti*. The power of Satsaṅga is tremendous. Its efficacy is most unfailing. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa has emphasised the need for prayer and the company of holy men. His *Upadeśa* to his devotees was "As it is not possible to get rid of an ailment without the help of a physician, so too it is necessary to constantly seek the company of religious people to get rid of the chronic disease of *Samśāra*. Satsaṅga begets yearning for God. It instils love of God. There is another benefit from holy company. "It helps one cultivate discrimination between real and unreal. To emphasise this fact Rāmakṛṣṇa has quoted a parable. Once a thief broke into a house, while its inmates were engrossed in a discourse of *Bhāgavata*, narrated by a saintly person. The thief on hearing a couple of gems from *Bhāgavata*, felt himself being uplifted and flooded by a sense of great peace. He pondered, "If this was the case in *Śrāvaṇa* of a holy text, what would be the joy of divine contemplation." He immediately shunned his

profession of burglary and embraced *Samnyāsa*. Samartha Rāmadāsa's advice to king Śivājī was to seek the company of holy men; God will come in search of you." Like a red hot ember, placed amidst a bunch of coal, ignites all of them, so too holy company is enough to illuminate all those who seek the kingdom of God.

The life of sage Vālmīki is a shining example emphasising the fruits of *Satsaṅga*. When Ratnākara, the dacoit met the *Sapta Ṛṣis*, his faculty of discrimination was illumined by their mere presence for a few minutes and he was convinced that he himself will have to pay for the evil deeds he had committed. His mind became clear and pure and he sought refuge at the feet of the *Sapta Ṛṣis*, who felt compelled to protect him, despite his evil ways and initiated him with the name of Lord Rāma. Ratnākara's evolution to the stage of saint Vālmīki and his impeccable work of *Rāmāyaṇa* not only shows the efficacy of Rāma's name but also the efficacy of his brief encounter with the *Sapta Ṛṣis*. Swāmī Śivānanda maintained that nobody was eternally bad; the sinner can be easily reformed by putting him in the company of saints. As an example, Jagāi and Madhāi who harboured ill-will against Caitanya and pelted stones on him, were redeemed by the all encompassing love of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and they became his ardent devotees. Thirumūllar in his illustrious *Tirumanthiram* has sung.

"The *Jñānīs* seek the lord of celestials
they who seek the company of *Jñānīs*
will attain truth.

They indeed walk in the path of virtue
and the truly blessed; to resort to
such is indeed Bliss supreme."

(*Thirumanthiram* 545)

As it is not possible for many to live in the presence of saintly persons, one can derive its benefits through other

modes of *Satsaṅga* namely *Bhajanas*, discourses, temple worship, taking part in *Pūjās* conducted in holy places and through *Swādhyāya*; reading books on life, philosophy and teachings of the emissaries of God. In fact *Swādhyāya* is an essential part in spiritual advancement.

While attending discourses, one may not be able to contribute or interact in the process. However he gets the priceless benefit of hearing (*Śravaṇam*). *Śravaṇam* of sacred scriptures or *Upadeśa* of god-men, is the first step in both *Bhakti Yoga* as well as *Jñāna Yoga*. While in the former, it is the first step in the *Nava Vidha Bhakti Mārga*, in the latter also the process starts with *Śravaṇa* followed by *Manana* and *Nididhyāsana*. One cannot have the benefit of *Śravaṇam* unless he is in *Satsaṅga*. The classic example of *Parīkṣit* who attained *Mokṣa* while hearing the *Bhāgavata Saptāham* recited by *Śuka Maharṣi* and *Prahlāda*, through the son of an *Asura*, developing *Sāttvika* qualities due to hearing the discourses of sage *Nārada*, while he was only in his mother's womb are worth remembering when we illustrate the glory of *Satsaṅga*.

In '*Mucukunda Stuti*', the king of the '*Ikṣvāku* dynasty,' speaks of the glory of *Satsaṅga* to Lord *Kṛṣṇa* in the following verse.

Satsaṅgame yarhi tadaiva sadgatau.....

Parāvareśa twayi Jāyate matiḥ.

'*Satsaṅga* leads to *Bhakti* towards thou, who art the cause and the ultimate refuge of the good.'

Ādi Śaṅkara emphasised that '*Trijagati Sajjanasaṅgatirekā*' (in the three worlds, association with the holy ones) is the only boat to cross the ocean of *Samsāra*. "*Sarṁsargajā doṣaguṇā bhavanti*" is the age old adage in Sanskrit. Characteristics of vice and virtue are formed due to association or company.

Our country is now bedevilled with utter lack of

character in all spheres of the society. This is due to the bad association and evil company of wicked persons compounded by the effect of visual media like T. V., films and unholy literature. No amount of science and technology can counteract these tendencies. Character can be built only by association with good and noble souls, who will give the lead since as the *Gītā* points out “*Yadyadācarati śreṣṭhaḥ.....*” Character has to come from the top like the proverbial *Ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥ Śākham* (inverted banian tree).” If our country has to recapture its past glory as a spiritual giant among nations, the people, especially the young and impressionable, will have to abjure evil ways and assiduously cultivate *Satsaṅga*. Verily *Satsaṅga*. is the unfailing cure, for the maladies of modern society.



ईक्षेत विभ्रममिदं मनसो विलासं दृष्टं विनष्टमतिलोलमलातचक्रम् ।
विज्ञानमेकमुरुधेव विभाति माया स्वप्नस्त्रिधा गुणविसर्गकृतो विकल्पः ॥

“One should look upon this world as an illusion and a creation of the mind, open to perception and evanescent as a dream and most unsteady like a revolving firebrand. Consciousness, though one, appears as many and this threefold division wrought by the projection of the (three) *Guṇas* is illusory appearance.”

—*Bhāgavata* (XI. 13.34)

In the midst of multifarious activities of the day to day life, if we are not careful enough to continue meditation on our *Iṣṭa Devatā*, then we are likely to be drawn to the attractions of the empirical world. So those who are really serious in reaching the Goal Supreme in this life itself should try to withdraw their minds from all objects of form, smell, taste, touch and sound.

—*Swami Gokulananda*

Let us Undertake Pilgrimage to Bābā Amaranātha

—Somanath Jena

In the year 1992, I was blessed with a successful pilgrimage of sacred Amaranatha. This year, announcement has already been made that the Yātrā for the aforesaid pilgrimage will start from 5th July, 98 till 5th August, 98 which is the day of *Rakṣā Pūrṇimā*, the ending day of Yātrā. During this period, the road up to Amaranātha, both from Pahaligaon and Sonmarg is opened. Before undertaking Yātrā, one has to reach Jammu Tawi either by bus or by train. Train is always connected from New Delhi and other places. After arrival at Jammu Tawi, one has to find accommodation. It is a big town, hotels are available, but the cheap stay can be availed of in the sacred *Dharmaśālā* called *Śrī Hari Siṃha* or *Śrīhari Dharmaśālā*. Both are safe, sacred and comfortable for plain living. One can enjoy the *Satsaṅga* in Harisimha *Dharmaśālā* also. Previously, there was no registration fee for the pilgrimage. But during this year Rs. 23/-per head has been fixed by Government of Jammu and Kashmir in Tourism Department. Once, a registration is made, the bus number is allotted in the ticket and ticket is issued on payment of the prescribed fare. Next day, early in the morning between 4 to 5 one is to board the bus allotted for Pahaligaon from Jammu from a particular place. Hundreds of buses ply simultaneously on the route being guarded by heavy security arrangement, both from behind and from the front side and regularly watched by various sentry posts through out the route. The distance up

to Pahaligaon can be covered and be reached by the next forenoon after making, if necessary, night halt at Anantanag. On the way, there is no difficulty and you can witness vast valley, hills, mountains, mountain streams. It is a virtue to offer drinking water and *Anna Prasāda* to the devotees on the way. It has been a running proverb that to provide water to the thirsty and morsel of food to the hungry will enable one to earn the merit of visiting icy image of Lord Amarnātha. So many *Anna Kṣetras* provide drinking water, free food, shelter to the devotees. On the way to Pahaligaon in the diversion, one can travel about 100 K. Ms., to reach Srinagar. Anybody willing to enter into Amaranatha through Sonmarg via Baltal has to cross Srinagar. Then, he has to proceed upward about 80 K. Ms., to reach the starting point of the route to Amaranatha through Sonmarg. The route to Amaranatha from that starting point via sonmarg is about 15 K. Ms., can be covered in a single day but the journey is a bit difficult as the path is most undulating and terrifically steep in climbing through the icy path. That is why about 0.5% of *Yātrīs* prefer to go through this route. But other 99.5% *Yātrīs* go through Pahaligaon to the holy cave of Amaranātha via Chandanwadi, Sesanag, Panchatarani.

Pahaligaon is a small town which comes after Anantanag. This tourist centre is having a tourist office of Government, looks after and controls the journey of the *Yātrīs* to Amaranātha. For accommodation, one can avail of the free accommodation in Gurudwārā and the camps managed by various *Akhādās* of various religious centres. They also provide free kitchen. But the hotels are very costly, both for boarding and lodging. There is a stream and the *Yātrīs* take bath in thousands in the cold water.

Pahaligaon is the base for starting *Yātrā* to Amaranatha. So one has to procure necessary medicine, dry food and readymade ration for the *Yātrā*. Persons who are young and

energetic can go by foot, but others old and unable to undertake the *Yātrā* by foot can hire *Jhūlā* or *Pālakī* to carry themselves on the back in a basket or in a cot or in a palanquin, carried by porters. One can procure also *Pīthū* (porter who carries luggages on his back) on payment. This *Pīthū* is a person residing in that hilly area accustomed to undertake journey in that area. The most important arrangement to be made at Pahaligaon is to pay fees and procure space for tents, to be availed at night and day time at Chandanwadi, Sesanag and Panchatarani. One can hire also single tent. But without payment and without showing the receipt, taken from Pahaligaon, these cannot be availed of on the way.

From Pahaligaon after proceeding about 14—18 K. Ms., on the road by the side of a stream, one can reach Chandanwadi. This road also sometimes can be covered by jeep and small buses, but the fare is exorbitant. *Yātrīs* prefer to go by foot.

Chandanwadi is a camp which looks like a town being the place of hundreds of tents, and it is on the base of the snow-covered hill and there is also a bridge over the icy covered patch to cross the stream. One has to pass the first night in the tent here at Chandanwadi.

Next day, the *Yātrā* has to start at about 4.00 A. M., towards Sesanag. One has to purchase a wooden stick, one end of which is fixed with a sharp iron nail to have good grasping and footing on the ground covered with ice while walking. The stick is like a friend when one has to cross the muddy, icy road. Immediately, hill will come and one has to cross. This is called Pisunghat. *Yātrīs* are found crying out of pain when they cross this Pisunghat. After this steep climb of Pisunghat a grassy land planked by the top icy hills will come. There, one can relax on blocks of snows found on the icy land in the small patches of green grass. Then

they gather some strength after relaxation. For walking, a local chappal is being sold. These chappals are made of straw. These give safety to the feet and good grasping. Since its height is 11,000 feet above the sea level, the cold wave is there. One has to carry woolen blanket, woolen socks, shawl and also a torch. After passing some kilometres, one has to pass through 'Babun Ghat.' Here, the wind blows with much ferocity. It also obstructs the speed of walking. After crossing this, the next camp Sesanag is reached. Here, also small temporary township has been made by the tourism Deptt. With fixture of tents for accommodating the pilgrims. Sesanag is reputed for Jhīla, made out of the blue water which is the result of melting of snow from the hills. Still devotees believe that the great Śeṣanāga is staying within the waters and it comes and becomes visible to the sincere devotees.

Next day at about 4.00 AM Yātrīs undertake journey to Panchatarini. Before reaching Panchatarini, one has to cover the road crossing the Ghat which stands 14,000 feet above the sea level. This is too steep to climb and the air is thin without oxygen and the roads are slippery. This is named as *Mahagunas*. After crossing muddy and sandy road in between two hills Panchatarini will come. This spot witnesses a perennial confluence as many as five hill streams flowing over. At a distance of about one K. M., a temporary anchor is made for pilgrims rest. There you will find *Chatras*, hotels and temporary tents and drinking water arrangements. Yātrīs coming from various sources, reside in a common tent ear-marked irrespective of age, sex, caste, creed. There remains no light also. Tourism Department provides certain tablets which are burnt by match-stick. Light comes giving heat in the tent. The floor of the tent is filled with ice. Above icy field, tarpouline are spread. Over that, you have to spread your blanket and cover shawl. You will feel terrible pain in your feet and shivering and aching cold.

Next day's journey is to the holy cave. It is about 9 K. Ms., from Panchatarini camp. The route is on the side of icy stream and the other side the steep hill is there. One has to be very cautious while walking through and any unmindfulness will cause slipping into icy stream. Onepointed attention towards Lord Amaranātha to the road will save. Towards the end of 9 K. Ms., route, one has to stand in a queue to climb the steps leading to holy cave. This cave is below the ice-covered mountain and the solid ice covers this portion all time except one month prior to *Rākhī Pūrṇimā*. During this one month period, the drops of water coming from melted snow form a *Liṅga* (shape of Śiva) about 2 to 3 feet high, and *Yātrīs* worship this. Nearby, you will find the *Amarakūpa* (the well containing water giving immortality), devotees take water from this well. It is believed that this will give them longevity if partaken. One can also find the immortal doves (*Amara Kapota*) in the caves, still living and still seen. The proverb goes that thousands of years ago, Lord Śiva was telling his consort, the immortal story and Pārvaṭī was hearing the story of the creation of universe. During the long discourse and story telling, Pārvaṭī at intervals was dittoing by indicating 'Hum' (yes). After sometime, Pārvaṭī went on dozing and found asleep. During that time at some intervals, the dittoing was indicated by two *Śukas/Sevakas* of Lord Śiva. After sometime when Pārvaṭī became awake, she told that she had not heard the last part of the story and was asleep. Lord Śiva could know that these *Śukas/Sevakas* have actually falsely imitated Pārvaṭī and given indication of *Hum* (yes) in token of dittoing. Actually, Pārvaṭī has not heard the full story. So Lord Śiva cursed these two *Śukas/Sevakas*. As a result of curse, they became Doves. Since they heard the immortal story they became immortal and *Yātrīs* still find them in the cave even thousands of years after.

There is no helipad or other arrangement like ropeway to reach this holy cave. VIPs sometime come with military helicopter and land in temporary helipad. The climax of the *Yātrā* is coming after 'Chhodimoubarak.' That means, on the day of *Ekādaśī*, the *Daśanāmi Akhādā* makes worships of Lord Śiva in Raṇavīreśwara temple at Jammu and takes sacred *Gadā* (mace) of Lord Śiva on procession. Sometime, the sacred *Gadā* (mace) of Śiva comes from Srinagar. This is carried in procession by thousands of saints upto the holy cave and on the day of *Rākhī Pūrṇimā* such procession ends at the holy cave and the *Yātrā* ends.

The benefits of the journey is, one is to take strain of accompanying of thousands of devotees and see the beauty of the nature, enjoy the cold air, cold-bath and 'aurora' of the saints and devotees lingering in the holy atmosphere. It is worth undertaking.



Nivṛtti is the fundamental basis of all morality and all religion, and the very perfection of it is entire self-abnegation, readiness to sacrifice mind and body and everything for another being. When a man has reached that state, he has attained to the perfection of *Karma Yoga*. This is the highest result of good works. Although a man has not studied a single system of philosophy, although he does not believe in any God, and never has believed, although he has not prayed even once in his whole life, if the simple power of good actions has brought him to that state where he is ready to give up his life and all else for others, he has arrived at the same point to which the religious man will come through his prayers and the philosopher through his knowledge; and so you may find that the philosopher, the worker and the devotee, all meet at one point, that one point being self-abnegation.

—Swami Vivekananda

Lord's Love Theme

—B. B. Rajput

I sing to Thee
Thy song of Love.

* * *

Love Thou art
Love Thy creed
Love Thou breed
Love Thou feed
Aye loving Lord
Love Thou trade
Love Thou create
Love Thy attribute
Love Thou distribute.

* * *

O loveful Lord
Embodiment of Love
Unfathomed Love
In essence Love
Love and Love
And nothing else.

* * *

I beseech Thy Love
I may ever breathe
Thy wind of Love
I may remain drown
Thy sea of Love
I may ever drink
Thy nectar of Love
O loveful Love
My loving Lord
I seek Thy Love
All the time
Day and Night



Laughing, Smiling and Weeping— True and False

—A. P. Ananda

मुस्कराते रहो, गुनगुनाते रहो
जीवन संगीत है, स्वर सजाते चलो।

—Santa Murārī Bāpū

As per Hindu mythology the human garb is very auspicious, sacred and worth enjoying as it is achieved only after taking 84 lacs of births of different species. Let us think whether we are really using our faculties to lead perfect happy life. The answer is 'No' as we are completely stressed nowadays and have unending cravings for trivial and voluptuous life. Thus in quest of happy life everywhere fake laughing clubs have sprung-up which, in fact, find no answer and give no succour to our problems.

Laughing, smiling and weeping are natural phenomena and the forced actions will not have much impact on us. Therefore, we should change our attitude towards life by positive thinking so that these actions come from within us. Artificial smiles/laughs are nothing but camouflage and ephemeral and real ones happen only when our body and mind are coherent. Laughing, smiling and weeping are good for body development (mental and physical) and sometimes helps us in venting out our worries. It is observed that some persons even in appalling conditions become stunned and dumb and do not vent out their worries. In the same way some people even in the cheerful and upbeat mood do not laugh or smile. Such type of persons become decadent and

prove burden to themselves, the society and family. No doubt exalted people are neither glee nor glum for achieving or losing anything.

When we are leading disquiet life some chemicals (serotonin) in our brain imbalance and the more we stress and wear a scowl the more we build up negative chemicals in our body. In the same way when we laugh and smile some toxins in our brain are eliminated and we feel fresh relaxed. There are numerous cells (building blocks) in our body which are decaying and fading away with our ageing process. Thus it is very necessary to activate these cells by supplying necessary oxygen to them, keeping ourselves busy with useful tasks. It is not out of place to mention here that nutritious and iron rich food and enjoying nature is very necessary for us as these carry more oxygen to the brain resulting in happy disposition and hilarious mood.

Smiling and laughing is like life blooming and bubbling and when these are for dispassion (devoid of emotion) have got therapeutic effect. By smiling the wrinkles of our face fade away and we look young. Smiling improves our lung power also. It is an antidote. One should have sense of humour and smiling is liking someone and wishing like namastey, salam and shaking hands etc. This act can awaken one's dormant spirits. One should not use sarcastic, taunting and pungent language for others. Even hard hitting words jokingly earn bad name for us and injure the feelings of others. Sometimes one should laugh at one's own past mistakes and evaluate his/her progress. We should laugh with people and not at people. An old adage says that smile costs nothing but conveys a lot. Also love all. Love is within you and all around you. Annihilate the five vices. Real love dawns when the attachment is destroyed. Smile more often. It increases face value. Dazzling smiles can retard the ageing process and repair tissues. Smile stimulates and lubricates

the mind to achieve positive results. Happy and lucky are those who possess smiling faces and spread happiness all over.

Some people giggle (laugh heartedly) and crackle while some chuckle. Some share their smiles and bliss with others. The children wear innocent smiles. Some grin (broad smile) like a horse when they are hilarious/exuberant and cheerful. If your smile is real, it means that you are positive, mature, confident, attractive and like someone you approve of him and his ideas, his way of talking, living, acting dressing up etc.

Some people have smirk smiles and show naughty glint in their eyes and some have notorious and wicked smiles. Wearing fake smiles, sometimes, are misunderstood, show your inner feelings and your dejecting a person. Sometimes we smile just to pamper someone like our bosses or from whom we expect some favours. There are professionals who use forced smiles like air-hostesses and waiters in restaurants greeting passengers/customers and also by jokers, models for advertisement of certain items and film actors etc. Those who always laugh without reason, make others and themselves silly and confused.

In the same way shedding crocodile tears and forcing someone for wailing at the loss of something or someone are fake and undesirable. Tears shed on martyrs are considered as flowers for paying homage. Shedding tears on the prosperity of some beloved one are due to grateful content. Tears flow incessantly when words are not sufficient to impart (communicate) the feelings. Tears are real and out of joy/feelings as mother bids farewell to her daughter, departing of friends and warriors from beloved ones and also Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, the darlings of people of Ayodhya, left their home on exile. Tears give relief for the helpless heart. If genuine, weeping is one of the effective

ways to develop *Bhakti* and reaching the Supreme Lord and also when tears make eyes wet in devotion.

So, smile to the oppressed, less opportunate and deprived classes of people. By doing so, Almighty will not only smile on you but shower His grace also on you.

And now at last, but not the least, we should wear smiles on each other as face is the mirror of mind. We should change our attitude towards life and change our life with virtues and not with the fate lines of our hands. Know the strength within you.



यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥

"The virtuous who partake of what is left over after sacrifice are absolved of all sins. Those sinful ones who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone eat only sin."

—Gītā (III. 13)

तदेजति तन्नैजति तददूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥

"That Self moves and That moves not. It is far and it is near. It is within all this and it is also outside all this."

—Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad (5)

The world would be a much happier place if we all practised more consideration, understanding, and forgiveness. These are some of the most wonderful words in our language.

—Henry H. Graham

The Importance of Dharma among the Puruṣārthas

—Swami Ranganathananda

Without the intervention of *Dharma*, search for sensory satisfactions and for wealth will become a danger to society, with a handful of powerful people exploiting millions of people. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche speaks of the superman who does not care for values, even for contract, but he comes upon the social scene in violence of deed and demeanour. That will not make for social health and well-being. Everybody must get a chance. That idea only comes through *Dharma*. Wherefrom does that idea come? What is its source? That is a separate subject. But here I merely mention the Vedantic stress on the *Dharma* as essential, by which certain restraints come on oneself from oneself, for carrying human evolution forward. If *Dharma* is not there, a group of upper class aristocrats can establish a dictatorship, and through violence of deed and demeanour, as Nietzsche bluntly expressed it, exploit all the lower classes.

This *Dharma* has two dimensions. One is law with its rules and regulations by the state. That is compulsion imposed upon you from the outside. The second is moral and ethical awareness. That is the subject of the science of values, something coming from within yourself spontaneously. One is legal and the other is moral or spiritual. The legal dimension of *Dharma* cannot become effective unless there is its moral dimension. No external compulsion can go far.

Suppose nobody is watching, then you may break all the state and social rules. We do it everyday in India. If nobody is watching, if the traffic policemen are not present, we break every traffic rule. If there is a wall, we break it and make a passage through it, that is nearest to my office. All these we do, in spite of State laws and regulations, because there is no moral awareness coming from within. When that is lacking, the tendency to bend laws and regulations to one's own convenience and benefit sets in and, if it is not restrained, it becomes habitual and all values become eroded, in spite of the enactment of more laws and regulations and codes of conduct. The people follow that a cynic has said about an eleventh unrecorded commandment over and above the ten commandments of the *Bible*. That eleventh is: Even if thou shalt break all the ten, see that thou art not caught by the law and the police!

Thus by mere legislative action of Union Parliaments and State Assemblies, nobody can be made moral. That comes from a deeper source, long ago proclaimed by *Vedānta* and now being hinted at by modern biology. When you live in a society, some regulation is necessary to ensure healthy human interactions taking place in that society, so that everybody gets the benefit of that society. That can be done only by a combination of external law and internal moral consciousness. Between the two, the internal moral consciousness is the more important one, because it will help you to observe the law more honestly and spontaneously. Such a person observes the law because he or she knows that it is good for all. This is how justice enriches the society, ensuring general satisfaction and happiness, even if in some aspects social conditions are hard. That moral awareness nobody can give you. You have to secure it for yourself by yourself. Why should I do this evil which will bring suffering to many people? Why should I steal crores of

money by corrupt practices when millions of men and women of my nation are poor and hungry? Why should I be corrupt while giving government sanctioned loans to our weaker sections? Such questions do not arise in the minds of millions of our so-called educated politicians and administrators today, because there is no awakening of moral awareness and not even the fear of law, since they know that they can circumvent it and that many colleagues will help them to do so. It looks as if most people in our country today are fully unresponsive to the science of values, and prefer to observe the eleventh commandment referred to earlier. And the resultant suffering affects all, including the corrupt, because, in an interdependent social order, he or she becomes the victim of other corrupt elements whom he or she has to approach to get your work done.

So *Sanātana Dharma* proclaims that the pursuit of *Artha* and *Kāma* must be regulated by *Dharma*, the science of values. No stable society can exist without *Dharma*, without the operation of ethical and moral values, such as love, truthfulness, justice, humanist concern, tolerance, dedication, strength, fearlessness, compassion, incorruptibility, service, capacity for team work, mutual helpfulness and inner peace. The *Gītā* (XVI. 1—3) gives a set of values known as *Daivī Sampat*, 'divine wealth,' beginning with *Abhayam*, fearlessness, and contrasts them with the group of evil tendencies known as *Āsurī Sampat*, 'demonic wealth.'

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥

"Fearlessness, purity of mind, establishing oneself in the *Yoga* of knowledge; charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, study, austerity, uprightness."

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥

“Non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness.”

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥

“Boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride; these (values) belong to one born for the divine state, O descendant of Bharata.”

It is important to note that the first moral value in this list is fearlessness. *Vedānta* holds that no virtue can be sustained without fearlessness; fear cannot be a source of moral action.

The next verse, verse 4, describes the demoniac qualities—

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।

अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥

“Ostentation, arrogance, and self-conceit, anger as also harshness, and ignorance belong to one who is born, O Pārth, for a demoniac state.”

These words relating to *Dharma* are often used today in our nation, namely, values or value-oriented society. While before political independence, we had observed values to guide our actions, after independence, we have almost forsaken all values. It is our good fortune that, since the last few years, our nation has become aware of this fall from value-oriented attitudes and actions and started discussing how to bring back values to our society. We are slowly becoming aware that *Dharma* or the science of values, and not merely physical science and technology, is also essential for national development.



The Glory of Rāmāyaṇa

— A. Rajendra Babu

Rāmāyaṇa which is the ancient epic, gives happiness to one and all by mere study. He who reads as *Swādhyāya* or listens to this with devotion and faith is freed from sins committed in a thousand births. He gets progeny (issues). Rāma and Sītā are highly pleased with that person who reads, hears or writes the *Rāmāyaṇa* with devotion. They grant him prosperity. He gets purity of heart and goes to the Supreme Abode of Viṣṇu.

Nārada desirous of doing good to the world during the course of his wanderings went to *Satyaloka*. He fell prostrated at the lotus-feet of *Brahmā* and praised Him. *Brahmā* said— “O *Devarṣi*! Do you wish to ask anything from me?” Nārada implores: “O Lord! In *Kaliyuga* people will not do virtuous deeds and acts. Evil actions will prevail and people will tell lies. People will covet other man’s property and speak evil of others. They will do injury to others and will be attached to other men’s wives.

“They will regard the body composed of five elements as *Ātmā*. They will be atheists. They will be endowed with foolish and crooked understanding and the intelligence of brutes. They will hate and ignore their father and will worship mammon, their wives as veritable gods. They will become slave of passion and lust.

“Brahmins will be greedy. By selling the *Vedas* they will fill up their belly. To amass wealth, they will read only sciences. They will be proud of their learnings. They will leave their *Varṇāśrama Dharma* and will cheat others. The

other castes *Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśyas* will not follow the injunctions of scriptures. The fourth caste *Śūdras* will take to the practices of Brahmins. Women will be unchaste and immoral. They will be fearless and treat their husbands with contempt. They will not give respect to elders and inimical will be towards their father-in-law."

"How can beings of this type attain happiness in the life to come? How can people attain salvation? What are the easy means for achieving the final emancipation?"

Brahmā saith to Nārada! "Do thou listen with rapt attention to what I say. By merely reciting *Rāmāyaṇa* of *Vālmīki* or *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* people will attain happiness herein and hereafter. He who reads even a half *Śloka* or a *Śloka* is vouchsafed, purified of all sins that very moment. He who daily recites *Rāmāyaṇa* with reverence, faith and concentration is said to be a *Jīvanmukta* or a liberated sage."

"He who worships *Rāmāyaṇa* daily with faith and reverence obtains the fruit of an *Aśwamedha* sacrifice. Even he who casually listens to *Rāmāyaṇa* from another without reverence is also freed from sin. He who bows to *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa* obtains the fruit of worshipping all gods."

"The merit that is obtained by the study of the *Vedas* or exposition of the *Śāstras* is attained by that person who writes out the whole of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* and gives it to a devotee of Rāma."

"He who observes fast on the *Ekādaśī* and expounds *Rāmāyaṇa* to an assembly of devotees attains the fruit of the *Puraścaraṇa* of each letter of the *Gāyatrī Mantra*."

"He who observes fast on the *Śrī Rāmanavamī* day and keeps a vigil at night and recites or hears the *Rāmāyaṇa* with concentration of mind attains the same merit which one gets by repeatedly visiting sacred places like *Kurukshetra* and living there at the time of the solar eclipse standing in the water gives in charity to Brahmins learned like *Vyāsa*

as much wealth as he can afford."

"Even Gods with Indra at their head wait to carry out the behests or commands of one who sings *Rāmāyaṇa* day and night. He who observes vows and daily reads *Rāmāyaṇa* gets the fruit of whatever he does multiplied a crore fold."

"Mere recitation of *Rāmahr̥daya* with a concentration of mind purifies one in three days, even if he is a slayer of a Brahmin. He who observes the vow of silence and reads the auspicious *Rāmahr̥daya* daily thrice before the image of Hanumān attains all that he wishes. If one reads *Rāmahr̥daya* circumambulating the *Tulasī* and the *Aśwattha* trees, when he reads each letter, he is absolved from the sin of Brahminicide."

"Śrī Rāma churned the ocean of the *Upaniṣads* and took out nectar of *Rāma Gītā* and gave it to Śrī Lakṣmaṇa who is no other than *Ādi Śeṣa* (Śrī Rāmānuja). One attains immortality by drinking this nectar."

"The sin that the *Rāma Gītā* does not destroy, is not destroyed anywhere in this world by any place sacred or otherwise. By reading *Rāma Gītā* for a month, one becomes purified and redeemed from the sin of killing a *Brāhmaṇa*. The sin that attaches to the receiving of an improper gift, to eating improper food, to speaking evil words is annihilated by a single recitation of the *Rāma Gītā*."

"He who reads the *Rāma Gītā* in front of the *Śāligrāma* image, or near the *Tulasī* or *Aśwattha* tree or before an assembly of virtuous men attains to that merit which is beyond human description. If a man reads *Rāma Gītā* with devotion in *Śrāddha*, the forefathers attain to the world of Viṣṇu."

"He who observes fast on the *Ekādaśī* day, reads the *Rāma Gītā* with a restrained mind at the foot of the *Aśwattha* tree on the *Dwādaśī* day becomes verily Rāma Himself and is adored by all the gods."

“One attains the immeasurable merit by merely reciting *Rāma Gītā* even without meditation, without gifts, without bathing in holy *Tīrthas*.”

“The son of Jamadagni heard *Rāma Gītā* recited by Pārvatī (consort of Lord Śiva) and attained the energy of Lord Hari.”

“All the *Purāṇas* and *Smṛtis* do not possess an iota or one sixteenth part of the greatness of epic *Rāmāyaṇa* of Śrī Vālmīki and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*.”



न	तथा	मे	प्रियतम	आत्मयोनिर्न	शंकरः ।
न	च	संकर्षणो	न	श्रीर्नैवात्मा	च यथा भवान् ॥
निरपेक्षं	मुनिं	शान्तं	निर्वैरं	समदर्शनम् ।	
अनुव्रजाम्यहं	नित्यं	पूयेयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥			

“Neither Brahmā nor Lord Śiva nor again Lord Balarāma nor Goddess Śrī nor my own personality is so very dear to Me as you. I ever dog the footsteps of him who is free from expectation, is given to contemplation, composed, free from animosity and sees unity everywhere, in order that I may be cleansed by the dust of his feet.”

—*Bhāgavata* (XI. 14.15-16)

It is better for a man to die, if he lives only to satisfy his own selfish ends. And, the man, who dies for the good of others, is really immortal.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Where, then, is God! Where? In the heart contrite and lowly, in the heart upright and holy is He, the Lord of love.

—*Sadhu Vaswani*

Is the Hindu Religion Dogmatic?

—G. C. Deb

"In India religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life."

—Havell

The term 'dogma' implies settled opinion laid down with authority. Does this meaning apply to the Hindu religion? Any religion founded by any high and towering personality, a prophet or a seer, on his own authority is more or less dogmatic in character. Such religions have got fundamentalism and are bound by creeds rigid or flexible. But the religion of the Hindus is not founded by any particular prophet or seer—though all the thinkers, seers, prophets and religious exponents have contributed towards the growth of this most ancient religion. Personal distinction, name and fame were far from the aim of the Hindu sages and they never cared to found any credal religion. Nevertheless they have left a legacy to the Hindus for which every one may feel proud.

There are worshippers of objects of nature, personal gods and goddesses and idols; there are monotheism, polytheism, monism, modified monism, agnosticism and materialism; there are diverse opinions, ideas, faiths and doctrines; and yet there is no conflict between them. All these ideas, opinions, faiths and doctrines exist side by side in the religion of the Hindus. What does it suggest? There is a profound sense of toleration of all the opinions, and the catholicity of the religion absorbed new ideas from abroad without any grudge. Whatever foreign elements ever

came from abroad were assimilated into the life-blood of the religious body. This is not possible in the case of a dogmatic religion.

There are believers, non-believers, monotheists, polytheists, *Advaitavādīs*, *Jainas*, *Vaiṣṇavas*, *Śāktas*, *Śaivas* and followers of many religious leaders. They all take their stand on the same platform under the common banner of Hinduism. Hinduism allows full freedom to individuals to develop themselves according to their own capacities. No formally established religion perhaps grants such unrestricted freedom.

The Hindu religion cannot be blamed for its creeds or dogmas. Every seer or prophet or religious exponent has offered suggestions in the matter of religion and spirituality. They have not given anything in a codified form or in the shape of commandments. They have simply narrated the results of their experiments and experiences, without any authoritative tone, for the guidance of the fellow-travellers.

The Hindu religion admits of various paths leading to the goal, and there are stages of development which depend on individual capacity. The followers of the religion can take up the path best suited for them and they have been granted freedom of choice. Even in the same family persons follow different courses without any prejudice or handicaps. There are as many ways as there are sages and difficulties arise at cross-roads of various injunctions issued by religious scriptures; hence Yudhiṣṭhira enjoins that an aspirant should follow in the footsteps of great men. This goes to show that everyone is free to follow the course of his choice. But the scriptures of all the credal religions are authoritative in tone and do not allow full freedom.

A great thinker said that religion is an ark in which we travel—but the discoveries of truth should be our own. The method is more or less scientific and we should proceed with open eyes. This saying truly applies in the case of the

Hindu religion which offers full scope for personal experiment and realization of truth by a direct method.

If anybody looks with a synthetic view he will at once find the catholicity, tolerance, moderation and magnanimity of this religion. None is condemned for his or her crude or subtle form of worship. In this connection we may refer to the *Gītā* wherein *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa has brought about a synthesis of all the popular forms of worship. "The message of the *Gītā*," says Sir Rādhākṛṣṇan, "is universal in its scope. The author sympathizes with all forms of worship and is, therefore, well fitted for the task of interpreting the spirit of Hinduism which is unwilling to break up culture into compartments and treat other forms of thought and practices in a spirit of negation." The *Gītā* is the consummation of the Hindu religion wherein everybody finds a shelter. The *Gītā* has delivered the message of religious freedom to all without any distinction of caste or creed and has opened up a royal road leading to the goal.



Although you should take care of the body and should follow the right laws of living, do not allow your efforts in this direction to become a preoccupation that consumes all your time. Do not make health the ruling factor in your life. Healing the soul also heals both body and mind. When you have healed your soul of ignorance you have also healed your mind and your body, for the darkness of mental inharmonies and physical disease can no longer exist when the light of wisdom enters your body temple.

—Self-Realization

Read and Digest

Samsāra is bondage and *Mukti* is liberation. Whatever draws your mind outward is *Samsāra*. Whatever puts your mind back into yourself is *Mukti*.

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Let us see the truth about ourselves. That is the best way we can pay homage to all the sages, belonging to all religions, all over the world. All religions, all words, all these are subject to time, space and causality. We speak in these terms, but really all the sages are nothing but you. This may seem shocking but it's the truth.

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We must understand that we are that even now, at this very moment. We must fully accept this truth even if we do not experience it yet. Ultimate success presupposes right understanding: that the body, mind, reason are not our Self. Nevertheless, this intellectual conviction, which is essential to begin with, must not be confused with the real experience of the Self. Ultimately all thoughts, ideas, notions will have to be given up so that the experience of the Self may shine unimpeded by the prism of our mind.

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If we all practise what we profess, all will be well with the world.



Renunciation and Service

—Dr. A. R. Mohapatra

Swāmī Vivekānanda's love for the poor and downtrodden is legendary. He said—

“May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.”

To Swāmī Vivekānanda, the only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, this is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything. When we have worshipped the *Virāt*, we shall be able to worship all other gods.

We can serve or worship our countrymen only if we have the capacity of renunciation. When the human soul draws back from the things of the world and tries to go into deeper things, when man understands that one day everything would be destroyed and to be reduced to almost mere matter, with this realisation only begins the renunciation. The *Karmayogī*'s renunciation is the shape of giving up all the fruits of his action, he is not attached to the results and he does not care for any reward. The whole gist of teaching is that you should work like a master and not as a slave. Work incessantly, but renounce its fruits. Work through freedom and work through love.

The main effect of work done for others is to purify ourselves and to avoid ego. The renunciation of sense pleasure is essential in the pursuit of *Bhakti*. When the love of God increases then the worldly desires and attachments to material objects gradually vanished and thrown aside and ultimately only the divine consciousness prevailed over the devotee. To Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa, *Kāminī* and *Kaṇcana* are the obstacle of spiritual austerity. *Bhakti Yoga* does not say 'Give Up,' it only says 'Love, Love the Highest and everything low naturally falls off from him, the object of whose love is the highest. *Bhakta's* renunciation is that *Vairāgya* or non-attachment for all things that are not God which results from *Anurāga* or great attachment to God.

The *Jñāna Yogī* has the harshest of all renunciation to go through as he has to realise from the very first that the whole of this solid-looking nature is all illusion. The *Jñāna Yoga* is the high philosophy of life. The *Jñānī* aims at the wholeness of things, the absolute the real the Brahman. Higher knowledge is the knowledge of Brahman. The *Jñānī* has to be free from all forms. To Swāmī Vivekānanda, all knowledge and all power are within and not without. All knowledge is within us, it is in the soul. The goal of all is the knowledge of the self, the realisation of the self. Renunciation alone is the real secret of all realisation. The 'Alpha' and 'Omega' of *Vedānta* Philosophy is to 'give up' the world; giving up the unreal and taking the real.

Service is the medium in and through which renunciation manifests itself. In fact renunciation is the soul and service its body. None can realise what renunciation is until and unless it finds its expression in and through selfless service. Service without renunciation is lifeless and renunciation without service is meaningless. Renunciation without service is a soul without body and service without renunciation

is a body without soul. Service without renunciation, therefore, is no service at all but His-service. Service and renunciation are in reality one and the same. Service is not an act of charity, it is in reality an act of love, pure and selfless, disregard of consequences.

According to *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, "Neither by progeny, nor by wealth, nor by performances of sacrifices but by renunciation alone, one can attain to immortal bliss." Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa eloquently proclaims the same idea when he declares his decree to his beloved disciple, Arjuna in the following illustrious lines: "Better indeed is the knowledge than *Abhyāsa*; meditation is more esteemed than knowledge, the renunciation of the fruit of action is better, peace immediately follows renunciation." (*Gītā* XII. 12). To Swāmī Vivekānanda, the renunciation is the stepping stone and the real centre and the real heart of all spiritual culture. Through renunciation alone this immortality is to be reached and goal can be achieved. There will be no spiritual strength unless one renounces the world. Swāmījī also said that if you desire to attain God, you will have to renounce *Kāma-Kāñcana* (Lust and Possession, S. V. C. W. III 457).

Service is the medium in and through which renunciation manifests itself. Service is of various kinds according as it is ministered on different planes in different times and places physical or material, intellectual or educational, social or national and moral or religious. It holds a very high place in every sphere of human life, particularly religious, in India, from the very prehistoric period. If we look back to the Upanishadic age, of which the Buddhistic period is an echo, we come across many a glowing reference to service.

Service has been characterised by the *Bhagavadgītā* as *Sāttvika*, *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika*. Actions are classified as *Karma*, obligatory action in other words duty, then *Akarma*, in-action and also *Vikarma*, forbidden action. Of these duties

or obligatory actions have to be performed at all times in all places free from all attachment, and without the least care for their fruits; and relinquishing action in anticipation of physical troubles and painfulness is *Rājasika* and yields no result, whereas, abandonment of the same out of delusion is *Tāmasika* and can never be tolerated. Men, who are born with divine attributes (*Daivī Prakṛti*) which are marked by non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty and absence of fickleness, are really the salt of this earth. Non-injury and compassion to all beings, irrespective of any distinction, are two of the most noble characteristics of the holy life. (*Vivekānanda: The Great Spiritual Teacher*, p. 413).

Work, whether good or bad, is always determined by its motive and the attitude with which the particular motive is realised. Work with motive does not come within the purview of service, for service is always pure and selfless. The attitude of one doing service to other (*Sevaka*) should be like that of a humble servant, who would consider that to serve only he has the right and not to its consequence. It is 'work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake.' It is (*Sevā*) or service, which is to be performed with humbleness with all humility and reverence. He should be conscious of the fact that service (*Sevā*) is not *Dayā* or an act of kindness or a compassion. An act of kindness or compassion (*Dayā*) has in it that proud sense of superiority from which *Sevā* (Selfless service) is absolutely free. The *Sevaka* feels grateful to the man whom he serves and thinks that it is he (*Sevya*) who has kindly agreed to give him the opportunity of practising a selfless service which is regarded as an act of virtue (*Swāmī Vivekānanda: The Great spiritual Teacher*, Ed. p. 415).

"The national ideal of India" says *Swāmī Vivekānanda*, is renunciation and service. *Upaniṣad* declares 'May your

father be an object of worship to you, may your preceptor be an object of adoration to you.' The great Swāmī Vivekānanda added: "May the suffering millions be the object of worship to you, may illiterate be the object of reverential service to you." (C.W.V. 6, p. 288). This of course, is certainly not a departure from, but a development of the eternal ideas of service embedded in the scriptures.

Swāmī Vivekānanda, has established the Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭha and Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission with the noble object of preaching and popularizing the spirit of renunciation and service. The Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭha where Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Order of monks used to stay with the observation of penances and austerities, by developing the spirit of self-sacrifice, stands for renunciation. The Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission which comprises in itself an endless variety of philanthropic activities stands for service. Their multifarious humanitarian activities, absolutely selfless in character, are the veritable expression of service. As repeatedly declared by Swāmī Vivekānanda, the order of Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭha and Mission is to serve a double purpose salvation of one's self and good of the world, "*Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya-ca.*"

The old ideal of selfless service has been handed down to posterity without any break through various religious ceremonies and festivals, in which acts of charity play everywhere a very important role. The spirit of service reaches its consummation when the *Sevaka* (server) finds the same Supreme Self everywhere as the manifestation of *Brahman*. To Swāmī Vivekānanda it is called *Śiva jñāne jīva sevā*. According to *Vedānta* Philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya *Jīva* and *Brahman* are identical. With this view in mind a server or a *Sevaka* can serve the mankind selflessly without the sense of ego.

According to Swāmī Vivekānanda, the *Vedānta* does not in reality denounce the world. What it seeks to teach is the

deification of the world and not its annihilation. It does not give us a suicidal advice to kill ourselves and annihilate the world. As per the *Īsopaniṣad* which says: "Whatever exists in this universe, is covered with the Lord." Swāmījī goes on further and says: "You can have your wife, it does not mean that you are to abandon her but that you are to see God in the wife. So also, you are to see God in your children. So in everything. In life and in death, in happiness and in misery, the Lord is equally present. The whole world is full of the Lord. Open your eyes and see Him. This is what *Vedānta* teaches. (Swāmī Vivekānanda—*Jñānayoga*, p. 140-141).

Swāmī Vivekānanda's practical *Vedānta*, *Tat tvam asi*—(that thou art) interprets that "Every soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divine within by controlling Nature, external and internal." His intense humanism also found expression in his doctrine of practical *Vedānta*. He maintained that the fundamental doctrine of *Vedānta*, namely, the basic Divinity of the *Jīva*, has a message for men in all stations of life.

According to Swāmījī, from the highest standpoint, self-realization is self-manifestation. He gives the meaning of life through strength and courage. He says: "make your nerves strong. What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men." One can serve the backward people with vigour and sound mind. Swāmījī was the worshipper of the living God. He made God in the heart of all, the sole object of his worship. Even as the child he would be overwhelmed to see the sufferings of the poor. He lived with the poor masses of India, slept with them, ate with them, cried for their material salvation. Service of this living God was the joy of his last days.

Swāmī Vivekānanda said, 'those who serve the servants

of God are His greatest servants. It is the greatest privilege in our life that we are allowed to serve the Lord in all these shapes. One cannot help anyone but can only serve. Blessed are they whose bodies get destroyed in the service of others.' He had a very comprehensive view of the welfare of the world especially of India. He aimed at the economic, social, moral and spiritual development of the people. He believed that the principles of *Vedānta*, if properly understood and applied in life, would bring about all round development of humanity. Like Prometheus, he brought down the spiritual power from heaven and made it spring up on earth in the hearts of all. This shifting of God from a far off heaven to the human heart, as our innermost self, marks a momentous advance in the spiritual history of the world.

Our duty to others means helping others, doing good to the world. Why should we do good to the world? Apparently, to help the world, but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us, but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you or I should come and help it. Yet we must do good. The desire to do good is the highest motive power we have if we know all the time that it is a privilege to help others.

Swāmījī said after so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth—God is present in every *Jīva*, there is no other God besides that who serves *Jīva*, serves God indeed." Seek your own self in every being that breathes and in every atom of the universe. When you realise this, you cannot live in this world without treating everyone with exceeding love and compassion. This is indeed practical *Vedānta*. This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Śiva in the poor, in the weak and in the diseased, really worships Śiva, and if

he sees Śiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary.

To Swāmī Vivekānanda the betterment should start with the humblest of the humble first and therefore he had uppermost in his mind the *Daridra Nārāyaṇa*—the God in the poor, the only God that exists, the only God in whom I believe, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races. The hungry, downtrodden 'of India must be given back their lost self-confidence and sense of self-respect. They must be taught to realise that they too have some duty and responsibility in the country.



त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
 कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥
 निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
 शरीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

"He who having totally given up attachment to actions and their fruit, no longer depends on the world, and is ever satisfied, does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action. Having subdued his mind and body, and given up all objects of enjoyment, and free from craving; he who performs sheer bodily actions does not incur sin."

—Gītā (IV. 20-21)

Prayer, *Japa*, meditation, study of philosophical books, pure food, enquiry and *Satsaṅga* will purify your mind and eradicate ignoble and wicked thoughts. Observe the vow of silence; you will then be able to control your speech. Practise *Yama* and *Niyama*. Develop *Sāttvika* qualities. Slowly eradicate negative qualities. By these practices you will not be able to do any wrong action. The force of *Sāttvika* habits will goad you on to do virtuous actions only.

—Swami Sivananda

Of Noble Bharata

—*Chilukuri Venkateswarlu*

All speech and action comes prepared
Out of the Eternal silence,
So the maid of Kaikeyī advised
And the Queen put it into force.

To produce tangible results,
To establish peace in the Universe,
The Supreme God of all the worlds
Honoured the word of kind, His father.

Bharata, true devotee of Lord God,
With his brotherly compassion
And his noble qualities in lot,
Worried much at the disruption.

Calm is the finale of each storm,
Peace radiates from holy men
In renunciation with service motto,
To those who come in contact with them.

Attaining peace at the Sight of Lord God,
Obeying His word as order,
Bharata left for his abode,
Leaving his soul with Him, however.



Self-Sacrifice

—Swami Vivekananda

This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the following story: After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pāṇḍava brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose, half of whose body was golden, and the other half brown; and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, "You are all liars; this is no sacrifice." "What !" they exclaimed, "you say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and everyone became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed." But the mongoose said, "There was once a little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brahmin with his wife, his son, and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three years' famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat, there was a knock at the door. The father opened it and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred person; he is as a god for the time being, and

must be treated as such. So the poor Brahmin said, "Come in, sir; you are welcome." He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, "oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger." Then the wife said to her husband, "Give him my share, but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.'" Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, "Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfil his obligations." The guest ate that but remained still unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor; and when I rolled my body on them, half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice.



One should never eat or drink anything except a leaf of the basil plant (*Tulasī*) while walking or even standing. One should perform *Ācamana* (sip a little water) immediately before and after meals.

—Jayadayal Goyandka

We live happily, indeed, free from ailments among the ailing! Among men who are ailing let us dwell free from ailments!

—J. P. Vaswani

Are Animals Surplus or Short?

—Panna Lall Mundhra

Some of the most pleasant pictures painted in the times of our ancestors, have animals in them. Like, we have the picture of a great grandfather in *Dhotī*, then aged six, with his arm around a calf, feeding her a bunch of green grass. Or a grandmother, then in her teens feeding pigeons, alongwith other small children. In our ancestors' times animals were treated as family members. Households which had a large number of animals prospered, for both animals and men depended on one another for their needs, and led healthy happy life. A wealthy man in those days was valued by the number of animals he owned. And animals, in our ancestor's times, were not only serving the purpose of transporting men and material from place to place but were also ploughing, watering, fertilising and pesticiding fields. Thus they were the source of getting nutritious food-grains, fruits, vegetables and also the most needed healthy food the milk. We had athletes, depending largely on milk and its products and had great stamina. We had warriors who had to fight with vigour and strength in battles and a major part of their diet used to be milk and butter.

But then, as time passed, we became more and more commercialised, desiring to acquire more money and wealth as fast as possible. In our mad race to acquire more money, we lost our logical economic base of animals, compassionate outlook and felt that other living creatures, who functioned slower but in a more natural way, are a burden, a surplus. So we started saying that animals overgraze forest lands,

consume vast quantity of foodgrains, and therefore, men do not get sufficient food.

In an approach to prove the point of animal surplusness the census figures of live stock being published by the Government of India from time to time became handy. We therefore need to see the Live Stock Census 1992 which was placed before the meeting of the State Ministers of Animal Husbandry and Dairying in December, 1996, which states the Live Stock figures as follows—Cow Cross Bred (CB) 15 million, Indian (Ind) 188 million total 203 million, Buffalo Male 17 Million. Female 66 million total 83 million. Goats 115 million. Sheep 50 million. Pigs 12 million. Camel 1 million. The animals less than a million in thousands are Yaks 58, Mithuns 153, Horse and Ponnies 824, Mules 196, Donkeys 933, and in total they are 468 millions. It is also being expected that 1997 census may show an increase of about 10 percent.

In this context, it is pertinent to remember that tens of thousands of animals are being slaughtered in about 5000 Mechanised and semi-mechanised slaughter houses and also by lakhs of butchers everyday. Obviously the sick, disabled, barren Cows, Buffaloes, Goats are virtually either nil or nominal. How far the hecalves are concerned, one can see them in large numbers on the door steps of slaughter houses for slaughtering to consume and export their meat. It is assumed that it is so; only they have not been shown separately in the census figures of Cow or they may be yet to be counted or extra.

We all know that the Indian population is about 900-950 million thus according to census figures for every two citizens we have one animal or the man-animal ratio is 2:1 as Live Stock population has been shown as 468 million. If we see the figures of Cows which are 203 million and she buffaloes 66 million in total 269 million then for every

five people's family we have one Cow or one buffalo. The goats are numbered as 115 million and so for every 10 people one goat. In other words for a family of 10 people we have two cows or two buffaloes and one goat.

Now, may I ask you sir, do you have such quantum of cattle in your family?

If we calculate the figures of milching animal as cow, buffalo, goat, and sheep then they are about 434 million.

If they are in such a large numbers then the logical question arises, why the per Capita availability of milk is only 172 grammes, which also may be including imported milk powder.

Thus, a fear psychosis developed and we forced them to compete with modern equipment like automobiles for transporting and with tractors and other mechanised agricultural implements for farming. Their dung and urine which are good sources of manure and pesticides got replaced by chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides. Even the nutritious milk got replaced by soyamilk and other drinks. As more and more modern scientific equipment got, in, the animals started looking as a burden on the society.

But then, a question arises, about the effectiveness of these ventures, which force animals to look like surplus, and prematurely send them, in lakhs, to the gates of the slaughter houses everyday. Have these really led to economic and health benefits to our society and life in general?

A glance at the state of our environment, clearly proves to what extent we have benefited from these modern ventures. Everyday, we see automobiles belching out noxious fumes, we see factories spew out poisonous vapours, and we see chemical fertilizers violently polluting land, air and water. We see chemicals and pesticides erode the fertility of the farm land and help the process of its desertifying, cause droughts and floods, poisons farm and dairy products,

make farmers disease prone.

The adverse effect of these chemicals on our fertile land is so much that in our largest grain producing state, paddy and wheat yields have fallen by 12 and 10 percent respectively since 1992. Meanwhile, the output of Coarse cereals and pulses continues to shrink, eroding the food base of the poor. Evidently, 30 years after it was launched, the Green Revolution has run its course or exhausted its potential, especially in the agriculturally most advanced areas. Northwestern India and parts of Andhra and Tamilnadu show a clear trend of yields and output falling. In Punjab 85 percent of land has no more ground water left to exploit. In Haryana, water logging and salinity affect nearly a third of all land. In U. P. and Andhra, farmers who have over saturated and killed lands with toxic chemicals, are now running for jobs in cities. And interestingly the chemical fertiliser consumption has increased eight times over the past 25 years, but the foodgrains output has not even doubled.

A glance at our changed food habits, where we now slaughter animals for food, under the misconception that we are maintaining their balance, will also prove how badly we are ruining our own health. In the process of consuming their flesh, we forget that all their lives they had been eating fodder over which chemical fertilizer and pesticides have been strewn and that many of these hazardous ingredients have accumulated in their flesh, which enter our bodies when we consume them. We forget that when an animal undergoes the terror and agony of slaughter, its body releases enormous quantity of Uric Acid and that also enters our body and thus causes diseases. We also forget the warning of eminent scientists that just through flesh eating we risk our body for 160 such diseases, which are normally meant for animals only. There are plenty of studies to suggest that flesh food is meant for carnivorous animals and not for humans.

But our temptation for consuming meat has reached such an extent, that in the name of farming, we are multiplying animals by artificial insemination. We inject medicines and antibiotics into them and even feed their own dung and urine to themselves alongwith crushed bones etc. The sole aim is that they should grow faster and faster, remain less costly and provide us more and more meat.

Ironically, at the same time, we also claim that animals are surplus, forgetting that if they are surplus, there would be no need to multiply them in these so-called farm houses.

If animals are surplus, then we need not import or construct gigantic plants for manufacturing chemical fertilizer and pesticides, since animals would have been the source of sufficient manure and pesticides. If animals are surplus, we would not have felt the need of importing so much petroleum products, spending precious foreign exchange as animals would have taken care of our rural transport and energy requirement. If animals are surplus our environment would have been less polluted to give us smooth breath and better health. If animals are surplus our unemployment problem would not have been so colossal. If animals are surplus we would have got poison free foodgrains, fruits and vegetables and plenty of nutritious milk.

In view of the above, I can only derive that, we are extremely short of animals. In my opinion the Live Stock Census figure should not have been 468 million but around 60—70 million.



Śrī Āñjaneya

—N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar

When the Lord Viṣṇu agreed to descend to the earth as the eldest son of Daśaratha to put an end to the inequities and the oppression of Rāvaṇa, the gods indulged in an act of great creation for bringing into existence mighty warriors who were to help in the demons' destruction. Hanumān was the son of Vāyu (the god of wind) by Āñjanā Devī, who was formerly an *Apsarā* or celestial damsel of the name of Puñjikasthālī and who had married Kesarī, the ruler of the Sumeru region. From his mother he gets the name of Āñjaneya. Even as a child he was endowed with enormous physical strength and swiftness of motion. Bereft of the mother's company for a while and hungry beyond measure, the little one beheld the rising sun, and taking it to be a luscious fruit it jumped into the sky to reach it and achieved its object almost. The Lord of the *Devas* did not approve of this eclipse of the sun and he struck the child with his *Vajra* (thunderbolt). The child fell down on a mountain and injured its left chin (बामहनु). It is for this reason that he acquired the name of Hanumān in later days. Vāyu was angry at this treatment of his son and refused to co-operate with the rest of the world, which consequently became motionless and almost dead. The gods propitiated him by blessing the child with several boons. Indra said that his famous *Vajrāyudha* was to have no potency against him. The sun-god gave him a portion of his resplendence and promised to make him a learned orator. He was to be deathless, said Varuṇa; Brahmā proclaimed that even his

own *Brahmāstra* (the Supreme weapon of war) was to remain really ineffective when directed against him; further, he was given the capacity to assume at will any shape or form or proportion. Endowed with these boons the child roamed at large and care-free in the hermitages of sages, throwing the articles in the *Āśramas* into disorder and disturbing ascetic peace and austerities. Finding the pranks of this little monkey unbearable, the sages, who were neither angry nor joyous, pronounced against him a little curse, namely, that he was to remain unconscious of his powers and prowess unless when reminded of the same by others and incited to great action or effort. It is this malediction that made Hanumān tame and mild as any other of his race at all ordinary times; and it is the timely reminder by others of his tremendous and elemental strength that made him cross the ocean in search of Sītā, bring a whole mountain on his shoulders to revive the dying Lakṣmaṇa, and perform other memorable feats of valour on the battlefield.

Vālī became the overlord of the Kiṣkindhā kingdom. Sugrīva was his younger brother. Hanumān was a general of the Vānara forces under them and became a constant companion of Sugrīva. When Vālī and Sugrīva became estranged and the latter was driven out of the kingdom, Hanumān went out into banishment with his friend and was one of his four *Amātyas* (ministers or counsellors). Pursued relentlessly by Vālī and driven from quarter to quarter, they finally made their abode in the mountain forest of Rṣyamūka, attached to the *Āśrama* of a sage called Mataṅga, into which Vālī could not enter because of a curse. It is while they were here that Śrī Rāmacandra, accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa came through the woods in search of Sītā, who had been kidnapped by Rāvaṇa. Afraid that they might be spies of Vālī in forest garb, Sugrīva sent Hanumān to find out who they were and what was their real mission. Hanumān

assumed the form of a mendicant and approached the wandering heroes to ascertain their history and antecedents.

The meeting was momentous. Hanumān was captivated by the appearance of the two brothers, their beauty and brightness, their charm of manner, their dignity and bearing, their *Kṣatriya* prowess beaming out of them in strange contrast to their ascetic costumes. On the other side, Śrī Rāmacandra was equally struck by the faultless speech of Hanumān, the loftiness of its diction and the sincerity, as betrayed in the unity of thought, speech and action, which he displayed in his utterance. Śrī Rāma was apparently drawn to Hanumān by some inexplicable but powerful bond of love and affection. The roots were thus laid of a devotion that was to become proverbial in literature, legend and history, and which serves even today as an example and an inspiration for all those who have set before themselves ideals of disinterested selflessness and service.



"This whole world is like a big factory of God. The main wheel revolves. From it belts are attached to other wheels and machines. Each small part of machine does its own allotted work. Man must serve others. He is part of the cycle and must perform his assigned task like the other parts.

If a man does not follow the wheel of the universe thus revolving if he leads a sensual life of absolute selfishness, he is simply wasting his life. He is a mere burden on earth. He is committing great sin indeed.

—Swami Sivananda

Saints—Greater than God

—Shree 'Bhasiab'

A question, quite-too-often a point of discussion among intellectuals, raised its head in a congregation of serious spiritual strivers—

Q. Are not Saints greater than God?

A. Yes, they are—because they are God-realised and now (can) show the trodden path(s) to aspirants. They are in this way, in this sense, greater than God. But don't please assign God's place to them. A bride pays greater respect to her parents-in-law than to her husband. But her heart is set only on the hubby. Give your heart to God; brain to your Saint—*Guru*. Follow his way and find Him. Think of God alone. Let Him be the cynosure of your mind. Let Him be the central subject of your dialogues and discussions.

Respect godmen in full measure. But do not go crazy after them. This craze would stand in the way of an aspirant meaning bussiness. Suppose a person has Delhi for his destination. On the way come many holy places and shrines. If he breaks his journey at these pious places, he would gain the joy of visiting them, but gets obviously delayed in reaching the destination.

Do not draw too close to godmen. Or else, you are likely to grow more interest in them than in the Chosen Ideal: such was also the word of caution doled out by Caitanya Mahāprabhu to his chosen disciples while directing them to Sri Vrindavan to realise the Lord of Life and Love.

Another thing. If too close, you would perhaps see some imperfection in the saint. You might then cool down in your

zeal of learning from him thus losing what you could gain from him.

Q. Sir, God is not visible to us: *Guru* is. So we depend on saint—*Gurus* and not that much on God.

A. Approach a Saint to be able to approach God. Saints want you to stride ahead to Him. Depend on them for guidance in spiritual practice for spiritual progress.

Omnipotence of Saints—

An elderly *Sādhū*, settled in a holy city since boyhood, asserted:

Saints are omnipotent. They could put an end to all sorrows in the world only if they so wished.

SB: Permit me to say that it is an entirely misconceived notion. If they could, they would have—compassionate as they are—done it long back. History and holy books offer no such example.

Q. They don't want to meddle with the will of God.

SB: Is it His will, Your Holiness, that people should suffer? God enjoins upon all, and especially on His devotees, to show mercy on suffering fellowmen. It is not 'meddling' but tuning with His wish that mankind is helped out of its miseries and maladies. So, don't please spread such superfluous notions among the faithfuls and followers. Forgive me.

Q. So you believe that saints have no such power?

SB: A saint is lost in the love of the beloved Lord. He therefore, has the all—too—difficult capacity to show us the path that leads up to Him. This capacity is the highest of all capacities in the world. This is why saints are the most powerful organ of Godhood. No need to force miraculous power on them: these are no compliment.

Not miracles but love for God is the hallmark of a saint, Love for God is reflected in his love for all living beings.

Saints and Miracles—

Q. You say there's no need to "force" miraculous powers

on saints. But many times miracles are seen coming to light.

A. Yes. It is the High Power that at times shows miracles in favour of a Saint to show his real worth to the people.

But the saint himself does not value or want them. If he comes to possess them, he does not use or exhibit them. If at all he does, the idea is to establish people's faith in the Almighty—not in his own spiritual height.

There are cases where when miraculous power appeared in saints, they virtually wept, and prayed to God to withdraw it, for else it could mean attention of the people to them and consequently their distraction from Him.

Q. Are all the wonders a farce?

A. Not necessarily. But the point is that a saint, by nature, is not interested in all these things.

An India-born foreign citizen:

Q. Sir, I myself have experienced many of your miracles. I can make a good inventory of them.

A. The miracles then show your power, not mine! (Laughter) They show your sincerity rewarded by the Omniscient. He wants to enthuse you through the one in whom you have reposed your spiritual trust.

Believe me, if I had the power, I would have saved all sufferers.

Q. "True miracles are created by men when they use the courage and intelligence God has given them", said Jean Anouilli, a foreign thinker.

A. Right. But in the realm of spirituality, true miracles are created by godmen when they surprise people by their extra-ordinary godly character and conduct. This has a lasting miraculous effect on viewers and witnesses.

May we grow the miracle of divine, universal, love in our life.

Courtesy—Kulwant Mand.



The Practice of the Presence of God

—*Brother Lawrence*

Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, France (1605—91), while yet in his teens, once saw a dry and leafless tree in mid-winter. It was clear to him at once that it would grow to its full stature, with the onset of spring. This signified the power of God. His realisation of this fact was so vivid that it proved a turning point in his life. He embarked on a religious career.

He was admitted a lay brother among the (barefooted) Carmelites in Paris in 1666. Since then he has been known as Brother Lawrence.

Brother Lawrence lived a holy life of communion with God. His main teaching is that one should live in constant awareness of the Presence of God.

The Practice of the Presence of God containing the maxims, conversations and letters of Brother Lawrence, is a valuable guide to seekers.

We present here some selections from the letters, originally published on the recommendation of Cardinal Noailles, Archbishop of Paris.

Since you desire so earnestly that I should communicate to you the method by which I arrived at that habitual sense of God's presence, which our Lord, of His mercy, has been pleased to vouchsafe to me, I must tell you that it is with great difficulty that I am prevailed on by your importunities; and now I do it only upon the terms that you show my letter to nobody. If I knew that you would let it be seen, all the desire that I have for your advancement would not

be able to determine me to it. The account I can give you is:

Having found in many books different methods of going to God and divers practices of the spiritual life, I thought this would serve rather to puzzle me than facilitate what I sought after, which was nothing but how to become wholly God's. This made me resolve to give the all for the all; so after having given myself wholly to God, that He might take away my sins, I renounced, for the love of Him, everything that was not He, and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world. Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor criminal at the feet of his judge; at other times I beheld Him in my heart as my father, as my God. I worshipped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in this holy presence, and recalling it as often as I found it wandered from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business as much all the day long as at the appointed times of prayer; for at all times, every hour every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thoughts of God.

Such has been my common practice ever since I entered in religion; and though I have done it very imperfectly, yet I have found great advantages by it. These, I well know, are to be imputed to the mere mercy and goodness of God, because we can do nothing without Him, and I still less than any. But when we are faithful to keep ourselves in His holy presence, and set Him always before us, this not only hinders our offending Him and doing anything that may displease Him, at least wilfully, but it also begets in us a holy freedom, and, if I may so speak, a familiarity with God, wherewith we ask and, that successfully, the

graces we stand in need of. In fine, by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of God rendered as it were natural to us. Give him thanks, if you please, with me, for His great goodness toward me, which I can never sufficiently admire, for the many favours He has done to so miserable a sinner as I am. May all things praise Him. Amen.

I am, in our Love,
Yours, etc.



By austerity a man achieves goodness, and through goodness he takes hold of the mind. Through the mind he reaches the self, and reaching the self he comes to rest.

—Maitreya Upaniṣad

The *Guru*-disciple relationship is the highest expression of friendship, for it is based on unconditional divine love and wisdom. It is the loftiest and most sacred of all relationships.

—Self-Realization

Prayer is making friendship with God.

—Divine Rays

Know that you are not this restless mind, but that you are the immortal, all-blissful, and changeless spirit.

—The Mountain Path

Marks of Noble Souls

तृष्णां छिन्धि भज क्षमां जहि मदं पापे रतिं मा कृथाः
 सत्यं ब्रह्मनुवाहि साधुपदवीं सेवस्व विद्वज्जनान्।
 आन्यान्मानय विहिषोऽप्यनुनय प्राच्छादय स्वान् गुणान्
 कीर्तयैवालय दुःखिते कुरु दयामेतत् सतां लक्षणम्॥
 अलमैव व्रतं यस्य दया दीनेषु सर्वदा।
 दाम्बक्रीडौ वशी यस्य स साधुः कथ्यते बुधैः॥
 विरक्तः परदारेषु निःस्पृहः सर्ववस्तुषु।
 दम्भभातसर्वहीनो यः स साधुः कथ्यते बुधैः॥
 यो हि नो कुरुते पापं सर्वभूतेषु कर्हिचित्।
 कर्मणा मनसा वाचा स साधुः कथ्यते बुधैः॥

"Get rid of avidity, practise forgiveness, give up
 arrogance, take no delight in sin, speak the truth, follow
 the ways of the virtuous, associate with the learned,
 honour those who are worthy of honour, be courteous
 even to the enemy, hide your virtues, guard your
 reputation and show compassion to the afflicted, for such
 are the marks of noble souls.

He whose object of devotion is Truth, who is ever
 compassionate to the poor and the meek, and has control
 over anger and lust, is called noble by men possessed
 of wisdom. He who has no attraction for another's wife,
 no thirst for worldly objects and is free from hypocrisy
 and jealousy, is called noble by men possessed of
 wisdom. He who never commits any sin through body,
 speech or mind, with reference to any living being, is
 called noble by men possessed of wisdom."

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An Appeal

Last year we published **Manusmṛtisāraṁ Number** of **Kalyana-Kalpataru** as its **Special Issue**. During the course of studying Manusmṛti a tremendously magnanimous image of **Hindu Saṁskṛti** was visualized with all its grandeur.

This inspired us and an outstanding demand of some of our learned readers caused us to bring out our next special as **Hindu Saṁskṛti Number** to be published in **October, 2000**.

We expected articles from our learned contributors that could present a real and wholesome picture of our culture in all its richness. But it was to our disappointment to note that most of the writings were not culture oriented.

We sincerely feel that it is only Hindu culture and Hindu way of social thinking which can remove the socio-cultural mist and gloom hanging over the world and we are making a tiny effort in this direction.

Due to the steep rise in the prices of paper, postal charges and other costs during the past two years we are forced to enhance the annual subscription for the next year to Rs. 80.00. We hope our subscribers will accept this moderate increase in an accommodative spirit.

A printed money-order form is attached with this issue for the convenience of the subscribers.

The Manager
Kalyana-Kalpataru
Gita Press, Gorakhpur (India)

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